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Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

Dialogue paper by youth*

International youth review of chapter 25 of Agenda 21: working with others to find a way forward

Introduction

1. Chapter 25 of Agenda 21[1] begins by stating: "The involvement of today's youth in environment and development decision-making and in the implementation of programmes is critical to the long-term success of Agenda 21." Never has it been more obvious that today's youth are committed to undertaking this responsibility. Youth commitment to and energy for sustainable development have been exemplified in the number of youth events that have taken place to assemble youth worldwide to create an understanding of the problems and an identification of solutions. These include, but are not limited to: the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Youth Retreat at the twenty-first session of the Governing Council in January-February 2001; the Borgholm Youth Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development in May 2001; the fourth session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System, held at Dakar in August 2001; the Baku Youth Earth Summit in September 2001; and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Youth Forum of the thirty-first session of the General Conference in October 2001. As such, the present review draws from the many existing youth declarations, recommendations and calls for action that resulted from recent global youth collaboration.

* Prepared by the Ad Hoc Working Group for the International Chapter 25 Youth Review, an international coalition of youth organizations from around the world. The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

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2. Youth around the world have been asked by the secretariat of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002, to collaborate and mobilize existing youth networks for the preparation of this dialogue paper. This work, along with the papers submitted by the eight other Agenda 21 major groups, aims to serve as an independent review of the progress made on major group chapters of Agenda 21. It is submitted with the understanding that it will be translated and distributed at the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in January 2002 and possibly made available at subsequent sessions.

3. Youth recognize that the dialogue papers submitted by major groups could likely be the only papers in the Summit's official documentation written by stakeholders outside the United Nations system. Youth are collectively thankful for this opportunity and sincerely hope that this review will be used in addressing the concerns of youth at the Johannesburg Summit.

4. Upon a request from the secretariat to submit this review, an "Ad Hoc Working Group for the International Chapter 25 Youth Review" was formed. The work was accomplished by youth from around the world working through drafting groups in six regions. These were South America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, South-west Asia, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe and North America. Some of the youth involved represent larger youth constituencies and organizations, while others acted as individuals representing their own views. Many were participants at recent global youth events or part of an existing network, such as the UNEP Youth Advisory Council. The work was accomplished through Internet communication and teleconferences. A list of the youth involved is included in the annex.

5. By virtue of being called a dialogue paper, which generally implies two-way communication, youth also note that this paper acts as only an initial step in the collaboration in work among youth, the Bureau of the Summit, the Summit secretariat, Governments and other stakeholders in the process leading up to the Summit. We look forward to continuing the dialogue during the planned multi-stakeholder dialogues segments at the sessions of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee and through other opportunities, especially with regard to the creation of partnerships for the implementation of solutions.

6. The Ad Hoc Working Group has followed the secretariat's suggestion that this review identify the progress achieved with regard to the implementation of chapter 25 of Agenda 21, as well as examine future priorities. In so doing, the paper has been organized into four main sections. Three sections are directly related to the major issues for which action is outlined in chapter 25. These include access to education and awareness for sustainable development, access to information and participation in all levels of decision-making, and, lastly, youth employment. An additional section has been added to include those issues that are not included in chapter 25, but that must be addressed, as youth have a significant role to play in achieving progress regarding these concerns.

7. Each section follows a specific format. It begins with a description of the commitments made in Agenda 21 in relation to the issue under review. This is followed by a brief discussion about progress achieved and remaining concerns. The most important part of each section is the statement of suggested actions for the implementation of solutions.

8. The review is so structured because of three guiding notions that youth around the world have to transmit to all stakeholders involved in the preparations for the Summit in Johannesburg. This review is one effort to make known these key notions, which conveyed simply are: **urgency, partnerships, and implementation**. This principal message is simple and the Ad Hoc Working Group only hopes that it stays at the forefront of all processes related to the Johannesburg Summit. Youth remain committed to working with others to find a way forward.

I. Access to education and creating awareness for sustainable development

Education and awareness: commitments in Agenda 21

9. Chapter 25 of Agenda 21 has several sections that address education and its relationship to children and youth communities. At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit),

held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, world leaders recognized the vital link between access to quality education and the health and well-being of the international youth community. They also recognized the need for capacity-building within youth communities in order to make positive progress towards global sustainable development efforts. Chapter 25 makes the following references to education and building awareness for sustainable development:

(a) "Each country, by the year 2000, should ensure that more than 50 per cent of its youth, gender balanced, are enrolled in or have access to appropriate secondary education or equivalent educational or vocational training programmes by increasing participation and access rates on an annual basis" (para. 25.5);

(b) "Governments, according to their strategies, should take measures to:

"Ensure access for all youth to all types of education, wherever appropriate, providing alternative learning structures, ensure that education reflects the economic and social needs of youth and incorporates the concepts of environmental awareness and sustainable development throughout the curricula; and expand vocational training, implementing innovative methods aimed at increasing practical skills, such as environmental scouting" (para. 25.9 (d));

(c) "Establish task forces that include youth and youth non-governmental organizations to develop educational and awareness programmes specifically targeted to the youth population on critical issues pertaining to youth. These task forces should use formal and non-formal educational methods to reach a maximum audience. National and local media, non-governmental organizations, businesses and other organizations should assist in these task forces" (para. 25.9 (f)).

10. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 is entirely dedicated to promoting education, public awareness, and training for sustainable development. The chapter focuses on three programme areas: reorienting education towards sustainable development; increasing public awareness; and promoting training. For example, the following statement in chapter 36 relates specifically to youth:

"Relevant authorities should ensure that every school is assisted in designing environmental activity work plans, with the participation of students and staff. Schools should involve schoolchildren in local and regional studies on environmental health, including safe drinking water, sanitation and food and ecosystems and in relevant activities, linking these studies with services and research in national parks, wildlife reserves, ecological heritage sites etc." (para. 36.5 (e)).

Education and awareness: progress achieved and remaining concerns

11. The word "education" is mentioned over 600 times in Agenda 21, frequency of mention being second only to that of the word "government". The importance of education — both formal and non-formal — to making forward progress towards sustainable development is recognized in nearly every chapter. Yet many national Governments have yet to take concrete, decisive steps towards developing effective formal and non-formal education strategies for sustainable development.

12. UNESCO estimates that there are more than 130 million children in the world, the majority of them girls, who are not enrolled in school. Access is particularly difficult for ethnic minorities, children with disabilities and those with human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Education for sustainable development is lacking significantly. Youth believe that the commitments made in Agenda 21 on the issue of education have not been duly addressed since 1992. Some of the key issues of concern are the following:

- Access to and enrolment in basic formal education (equally for young females and males) is still very low in many countries;
- Quality of education is endangered in many countries because of insufficient social and financial appreciation of educators. Furthermore, members of the teaching community are not being given education for environment and sustainable development training when they are earning their teaching credentials;
- Educators and students do not have a guaranteed voice in international sustainable development discussions at the United Nations, as they are not a recognized major group;

- The formal education system is still quite traditional and rigid and does not allow for integration of knowledge, creative thinking and experiential learning — all of which are important characteristics of education for sustainability. There is a lack of integration of sustainable development issues into the formal education system;

- Nearly 10 years after the Rio conference, and nearly 30 years after the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in June 1972, most of the people of the world still do not have a good understanding of sustainable development and why it is important; and many have never heard of Agenda 21;

- There is still limited scientific, sociological and economic information on what steps need to be taken to move the world towards sustainability, thus making education and awareness-building difficult;

- There is a lack of access to information on local, national and international sustainable development issues, which has led — in the youth community — to a lack of awareness and limited capacity-building for youth action;

- The capacity of youth organizations to develop "for youth by youth" formal and non-formal education for sustainability programmes is highly limited owing to lack of resources and lack of recognition of the importance of this type of programming;

- Much informal education of young people is coming from media, advertising and mass marketing sources, as these are where financial resources are focused. Non-profit agencies dedicated to education for sustainable development do not have the same resources or influence necessary to counter these often anti-sustainability messages that dominate many cultures. Privatization of education services is also becoming a concern in the current trade-dominated global culture.

Education and awareness: suggested actions and identification of implementation partners

13. The international youth community feels the following actions would greatly improve the implementation of educational and awareness-building commitments for sustainable development as set forth in Agenda 21.

14. We wish to add our support to the following actions as suggested through existing youth declarations:

- The International Student Festival in Trondheim, Norway (ISFiT) gathered 460 students from 106 countries in March 2001. Supported by students all over the world, the 2001 Trondheim Declaration states that the education community should be recognized as a fundamental force in implementing sustainable development and, as a consequence, should be established as a tenth major group. Youth continue to support this action. Partners for implementation include national and international educators and teaching associations as well as national delegations involved in the drafting and decision-making processes of new agreements at the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

- The Baku Youth Earth Treaty Action Statement, drafted at the Youth Earth Summit in Baku, Azerbaijan, in September 2001, recommends that curriculum related to sustainable development be accomplished in part through "learning by doing" projects. Youth request that students, teachers and administrators work together to ensure that learning through local, applied and active methods becomes a utilized tool for sustainability;

- The Ad Hoc Working Group calls for increased access to computer technology and the Internet for young people recognizing their importance as an educational and communication tool. Young people participating in the fourth session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System, held in Dakar, Senegal, in August 2001, recommend an increase in technical, technological, material and financial support through the establishment of an Education and Information and Communication Technologies

(ICT) Fund, which promotes North-South and South-South cooperation, national and regional networking, and government and private partnerships of ICT training centres. See Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy (A/C.3/56/2, annex I), para. 18 (a);

- Youth need to be engaged in educational initiatives developed by Governments and other non-governmental organizations for young people. The importance of for-youth-by-youth education must be recognized by other organizations working on education for sustainable development. The UNESCO Youth Forum of the thirty-first session of the General Conference held in Paris, France, in October 2001 acknowledges the importance of peer education: young people training young people are an underestimated resource. It also calls for a better recognition of non-formal education, through closer cooperation between formal institutions for education and regional or national branches of youth non-governmental organizations.

15. Additionally, the Ad Hoc Working Group also proposes the following actions:

- Integrate principles of sustainable development into the formal educational system. Of particular importance is the integration of sustainability issues into the post-secondary education system, especially programmes like law, engineering, the sciences, business and economics, and sociology. Simply having programmes dedicated to environmental studies/science is not enough;
- Build collaborative international research centres (like a global centre of science and education for sustainable development) dedicated to research, and develop and test ideas addressing how the world might practically make progress towards sustainability;
- Enhance mass media to spread information about sustainable development issues, specifically ideas for how to make a positive change from the personal to the international scale, and to become an educational tool through channels such as interconnected radio, television and the Internet;
- Encourage the corporate sector and labour unions to include sustainable development in their education and training programmes;
- More scholarship and funding opportunities should be created for young people interested in pursuing research and academic work in the field of sustainable development;
- Focus on reducing the gender inequalities in education, including access to technological development;
- Recognize that education is a basic human right and that it is required if youth are to find meaningful employment and become engaged in decision-making in their futures. This requires support for young people who have missed the opportunity to be educated, such as street children, migrant populations and any other persons outside the formal education systems;
- Develop State-level "Education for sustainability" strategies to coordinate and consolidate efforts. Create a set of international indicators to measure progress made towards education for sustainable development that is more comprehensive than the current set of Commission on Sustainable Development indicators on this issue;
- Use the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development to identify sustainability in education as a priority theme for discussion and to develop a concrete and comprehensive international plan of action on sustainability in education.

II. Access to information and engagement in all levels of decision-making

Information and engagement: commitments in Agenda 21

16. Several of the objectives and actions described in chapter 25 make direct commitments to youth involvement and engagement in all levels of decision-making. If the involvement of today's youth is critical to the long-term success of Agenda 21, then clearly processes must be in place to promote meaningful dialogue between the youth community and all levels of government on its implementation. Chapter 25 addresses the issue of youth access to information and decision-making through the following commitments:

(a) "Each country should, in consultation with its youth communities, establish a process to promote dialogue between the youth community and Government at all levels and to establish mechanisms that permit youth access to information and provide them with the opportunity to present their perspectives on government decisions, including the implementation of Agenda 21" (para. 25.4);

(b) "Each country and the United Nations should support the promotion and creation of mechanisms to involve youth representation in all United Nations processes in order to influence those processes" (para. 25.7);

(c) "Governments, according to their strategies, should take measures to:

(i) "Establish procedures allowing for consultation and possible participation of youth of both genders, by 1993, in decision-making processes with regard to the environment, involving youth at the local, national and regional levels" (para. 25.9 (a));

(ii) "Promote dialogue with youth organizations regarding the drafting and evaluation of environment plans and programmes or questions on development" (para. 25.9 (b));

(iii) "Consider for incorporation into relevant policies the recommendations of international, regional and local youth conferences and other forums that offer youth perspectives on social and economic development and resource management" (para. 25.9 (c));

(iv) "Give support to programmes, projects, networks, national organizations and youth non-governmental organizations to examine the integration of programmes in relation to their project requirements, encouraging the involvement of youth in project identification, design, implementation and follow-up" (para. 25.9 (g));

(v) "Include youth representatives in their delegations to international meetings, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted in 1968, 1977, 1985 and 1989" (para. 25.9 (h)).

Information and engagement: progress achieved and remaining concerns

17. During the last years, the number of participants and actions taken by youth, particularly in the environmental movement, have greatly increased. Many organizations, from international to local, have recognized the commitment of youth to sustainable development and incorporated the work of young people in their processes. Some excellent international examples include: the Youth Advisory Council of UNEP and its contributions at the twenty-first session of the Governing Council in February 2001, the six-year technical project of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to empower young people to become active partners in food security and the youth coordination unit of UNESCO which provides information on United Nations youth-related activities. At the national and local levels, some Governments have established youth round tables or young parliaments. However, these functions are often fulfilled as sporadic consultations that occur after key decisions and processes have already been determined. Often youth do not know how their input has been implemented, if at all, and what the outcome is of their work.

18. One of the easiest ways in which to evaluate the progress achieved with regard to youth participation in all levels of decision-making is simply to count how many government delegations at the second session of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee include youth representatives. At the organizational session of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee held in April-May 2001, there were no more than four or five countries that had kept their Agenda 21 commitment to include youth representatives in their delegations to international meetings. Unfortunately, this is indicative of youth engagement at regional and national levels of decision-making, as well as of the state of access to information that would enable youth to understand the process and benefit of their involvement.

19. Youth from around the world have voiced several similar concerns about their access to information and meaningful and substantive participation in decision-making. These include the following:

- There is a continuing lack of access to information that would empower youth to

understand the decision-making process and substantively contribute to policy formation;

- In the development of national strategies for sustainable development, young people were not included on advisory bodies or in other aspects of the decision-making process;

- There is an increasing reliance of Governments on web sites to act as the sole means of legitimate public consultation. In many countries, the only opportunity to contribute to policies on sustainable development and matters related to the World Summit on Sustainable Development is a web site portal that remains open for input for a period of a couple of weeks. While this is one form of consultation, it often exists without significant awareness among the public and cannot be viewed as an adequate strategy in itself to involve youth, or civil society as a whole;

- Youth engagement continues to be fragmented and sporadic at best. A bit of participation here and there will not serve any useful purpose and can be interpreted as involving youth only for the purpose of satisfying a requirement or as a symbolic act without real consequences or recognition of youth as partners in the development of solutions;

- Youth are often incorporated in the later stages of policy- and decision-making. Often, their work takes place in "parallel events" and is not integrated into official processes;

- Despite the fact that numerous international youth events have produced excellent recommendations for progress, there is little evidence that Governments have obtained or acknowledged this input from youth or explained how it will be used in the development of their policies;

- There persists a lack of government effort to establish, in consultation with youth, a process to promote dialogue between the youth community and government at all levels and to establish mechanisms that permit youth access to information and provide them with the opportunity to present their perspectives on government decisions, including the implementation of Agenda 21;

- There persists an absence of support to projects, networks and national youth non-governmental organizations so as to involve youth in project identification, design, implementation and follow-up.

Information and engagement: suggested actions and identification of implementation partners

20. Youth feel the following actions would help to achieve the commitments to youth access to information and engagement in the decision-making process, as set forth in Agenda 21:

- Recognize that youth currently have insufficient access to information to understand the context of decision-making. Unfortunately, this state of affairs is often interpreted as stemming from a lack of political will to involve youth in policy formation and implementation;

- Undertake a systematic review of the channels of information dissemination and management frameworks. Assist in the development of effective communication and information sharing mechanisms, designed in conjunction with youth, for access and transfer of knowledge;

- Acknowledge the current existing channels of information exchange and integrate them into the formal information dissemination process;

- Continue to facilitate the interactions and sharing of information between major Agenda 21 groups and other organizations involved in the preparations for the Summit;

- Improve the information given to young people in order to enable them to participate effectively in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes;

- Facilitate and support the exchange of information of young people between countries. Sharing of information between young people from industrialized countries and those from developing countries is an effective way to ensure understanding of the world situation with regard to sustainable development and will allow youth to better devise recommendations;

- Offer resources and support for young people to become aware of and learn about the issues related to the Summit. Support "for-youth-by-

youth" awareness-raising and information distribution initiatives to be undertaken;

- Support the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy, which recommends that national Governments design and implement programmes that can build the institutional capacity of youth organizations (see A/C.3/56/2, annex I, para. 54). The Ad Hoc Working Group supports the creation of independent and democratic local and national youth councils, as well as regional platforms where they do not exist;
- Include youth representatives, selected by youth in an open and democratic manner, in government delegations at all international and regional preparatory conferences for the Summit;
- Call upon the United Nations Youth Unit, with the assistance of youth organizations working in this area, to serve as a clearing house for information for youth organizations for these youth representatives;
- Support the Dakar recommendation that there be increased representation of youth within the United Nations Youth Unit itself through a system of placements of members of youth organizations, as well as increased status for the Youth Unit within the United Nations system to coordinate all youth participation at the United Nations (para. 52);
- Ultimately the Ad Hoc Working Group calls upon Governments, the United Nations and civil society organizations to support young people in their endeavours to obtain resources for extensive and comprehensive youth empowerment programmes.

III. Youth employment

Youth employment: commitments in Agenda 21

21. Chapter 25 of Agenda 21 has several sections that address the important relationship between youth employment and sustainable development. Direct commitments in chapter 25 related to youth employment include the following:

(a) "Each country should undertake initiatives aimed at reducing current levels of youth unemployment, particularly where they are disproportionately high in comparison to the overall unemployment rate" (para. 25.6);

(b) "Governments, according to their strategies, should take measures to:

"In cooperation with relevant ministries and organizations, including representatives of youth, develop and implement strategies for creating alternative employment opportunities and provide required training to young men and women" (para. 25.9 (e)).

Youth employment: progress achieved and remaining concerns

22. Although the experiences of young people in industrialized and developing countries are very different, they share common concerns about their future when it comes to finding decent and meaningful employment. With many of the world's major economies slowing in growth, this is an increasing concern. The Secretary-General sums up the situation best when he states that "youth make up more than 40 per cent of the world's total unemployed. There are an estimated 66 million unemployed young people in the world today — an increase of nearly 10 million since 1965" (July 2001).

23. Young people wish to acknowledge the current efforts under way to improve youth employment. Heads of State and Government resolved to address the challenge of youth employment in the United Nations Millennium Declaration[2] by agreeing to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work" (see para. 20). The Ad Hoc Working Group applauds the Youth Employment Network, which draws its mandate from the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, and brings together a broad range of high- and technical-level partners with the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Office as its joint secretariat. It is exactly this type of action — a partnership that brings together creative leaders in industry, civil society, government and international organizations to solve a difficult issue — that should serve as a model for creating solutions for change at the Summit.

24. In brief, youth around the world continue to share the following concerns regarding youth employment:

- Underemployment is a major concern, particularly as it relates to the engagement of more and more young people in the informal sector. This sector is problematic because it is typically characterized by few benefits, low remuneration, poor health and safety standards, no job protection and little security for the future;
- There remains a significant gender gap in relation to youth employment. Young women are often excluded from vocational recruitment and training and face continuing cultural factors that proscribe their employment choices. This limits young women with respect to accessing higher-paying and more rewarding occupations;
- There is a gap between the rapid pace of change that creates demand for new skills and the provision of training and support for lifelong learning. There is a growing number of young people who are graduating and yet are unable to obtain work despite severe skill shortages. There is a sense of hopelessness, particularly among those who feel unable to access the knowledge economy and network society based on new ICT technologies;
- There is a lack of support, in terms of apprenticeships and mentoring programmes, as well as legal and financial guidance, for youth wishing to engage in entrepreneurship or creating small enterprises. There is an undervaluation of the employment prospects within this sector of the economy;
- There is a lack of collaboration to work with youth to address their unemployment concerns, often accompanied by the view that, instead of being partners for development, youth are simply a target group for which employment must be found.

Youth employment: suggested actions and identification of implementation partners

25. Youth suggest the following specific actions to be undertaken in partnership with other stakeholders to further the achievement of the objectives outlined in chapter 25 with regard to youth employment:

- Draw up national action plans on youth employment as a matter of priority, as encouraged in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Mobilize political commitment and practical action to rapidly increase employment opportunities for youth. The time has come to translate political commitments of national leaders into public policies;
- Support the recommendations concerning employment made in the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy by young people participating in the fourth session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System. Specifically, the Ad Hoc Working Group applauds the call for the more effective promotion of entrepreneurship among young women and men by provision of better information on market opportunities, training in business, access to capital, mentoring by qualified people and other business support activities;
- Promote programmes for both basic education and retraining needs that include young women, especially in the area of science and technology. We especially support the recommendations made by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in its issues paper entitled "Creating Decent Work for Young People", such as providing an educational environment with childcare support, drawing on young women as trainers to put female trainees more at ease, and creating support groups and professional networks for women in training programmes, to name a few;
- Create willingness among decision makers to learn from more successful countries. Youth should be included in the identification, promotion and dissemination of these best practices;
- Recognize potential solutions for the informal sector, such as encouraging initiatives in the informal sector to become small enterprises that generate employment. Create access to and support for administrative and regulatory procedures for business registration;
- Apply support to the Youth Employment Summit and facilitate the participation of youth from

various countries in this event. The Youth Employment Summit will take place in Alexandria, Egypt, in September 2002, very soon after the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and will be an excellent forum for transmitting innovative policies and practices and initiating committed action;

- Use the World Summit on Sustainable Development to create an important impetus to mobilize political commitment and practical action to immediately increase employment opportunities for youth, especially with respect to renewing commitment for the Youth Employment Network;
- Recognize that young people are an asset in building economies and that the current generation of youth is more educated and trained than ever.

IV. Missing concerns from chapter 25 that are important to youth

Missing concerns from Chapter 25: commitments in Agenda 21

26. Beyond the issues of education, raising awareness for sustainable development, access to information, participation in all levels of decision-making and employment, chapter 25 makes the following important commitments regarding youth:

(a) "Each country should combat human rights abuses against young people, particularly young women and girls, and should consider providing all youth with legal protection, skills, opportunities and the support necessary for them to fulfil their personal, economic and social aspirations and potentials" (para. 25.8);

(b) "Governments, according to their strategies, should take measures to:

"Give support to programmes, projects, networks, national organizations and youth non-governmental organizations to examine the integration of programmes in relation to their project requirements, encouraging the involvement of youth in project identification, design, implementation and follow-up" (para. 25.9 (g)).

27. These statements are very vague, making it quite difficult to access progress in the achievement of the commitments they embody. This being the case, youth have identified some of the key issues that need to be improved if indeed they are "to fulfil their personal, economic and social aspirations and potentials". These issues must be specifically addressed in relation to youth, either by virtue of the fact that youth are linked to the causes of the issues or by virtue of the fact that youth are at the centre of coping with the effects of these issues. This is reiterated in section 25.2 of Agenda 21 when it is noted that youth have the capacity to mobilize support, as well as to add unique perspectives that need to be taken into account. It is clear that any renewed commitment or action undertaken to address these issues must include the meaningful involvement of youth. By the same token, in order to combat the continued deterioration of the status of youth worldwide, these issues must be addressed. The specific topics chosen for discussion in this review include:

- HIV/AIDS;
- Unsustainable consumption and lifestyles;
- War, conflicts and security;
- Trade and strategies for poverty elimination;
- Climate change.

28. As with the other sections of this review, the concerns of youth relating to each of these issues will be briefly stated, followed by two or three specific recommendations that can form the basis of a continued discussion on action and implementation of solutions.

Missing concerns from chapter 25: remaining concerns, suggested actions and possible partners

HIV/AIDS

29. HIV/AIDS is decimating the current generation of youth. The fourth session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System, in its statement on HIV/AIDS (A/C.3/56/2, annex II, paras. 1-2), declared the issue to be the greatest threat to the health and security of youth today, as more than half of all new HIV/AIDS deaths occur in people under age 24. This crisis is ravaging the current generation of youth in

Africa and aborting its gains in sustainable development. It is also an increasingly deadly threat to youth on all other continents. For this reason, actions put forth through the World Summit on Sustainable Development must:

- Remove barriers to youth in respect of prevention, including increasing the culturally appropriate spread of information, medical supplies and care to combat the transmission of the disease;
- Implement the considerations identified in the proliferation of youth documents about AIDS including, but not limited to, the Youth Caucus position paper submitted to the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, held in June 2001; the 2001 Asia-Pacific Youth Declaration; youth input at the 2000 African Development Forum; and the 2001 Dakar World Youth Forum Empowerment Strategy;
- Call upon all countries to increase financial resources for HIV/AIDS to a level that is proportionate to the gravity of the pandemic. Contributions to the Global AIDS and Health Fund must be increased to the levels recommended by the Secretary-General. Governments and multilateral aid institutions must be convinced that there can be no greater reason to forgive debt to the least developed countries than the need for funding to be directed towards addressing the HIV/AIDS crisis.

Unsustainable consumption and lifestyles

30. If everyone in the world were to consume resources like the average European or North American, it is estimated that we would need another six planets to provide the necessary resources. Combine this sobering image with the fact that a large proportion of today's commercial campaigns, movies, music and other forms of advertising target young people as key consumers of goods, and the importance of including youth in the efforts to achieve sustainable consumption is obvious. Thankfully, many young people have begun adopting more environmentally friendly and ethically sound consumption practices. However, this change in young people's practices is hardly widespread and needs to be addressed through the following actions:

- Media and mass advertising must become allies in changing patterns of over-consumption, especially in the developed world. The message that sustainable consumption is about finding a balance between our rights as consumers and our responsibilities as citizens to choose a lifestyle that limits negative environmental impacts and respects the right of all people to live and work in safe and healthy conditions, must be widespread;
- Governments must implement policy tools that encourage sustainable lifestyles. These include such tools as environmental laws, removal of subsidies for polluting production processes, green taxes, and public eco-campaigns;
- In 2001, UNEP and UNESCO undertook a joint research project on Youth and Sustainable Consumption called "Is the Future Yours?" Such studies should be expanded upon and used to establish partnerships with other stakeholders for the purpose of devising appropriate public policies to promote sustainable consumption patterns.

War, conflicts and security

31. There is no denying that, in the face of war and conflict, and the refugee and humanitarian crises that inevitably ensue, youth are the most vulnerable and devastatingly ill-fated. Youth are also well aware that the founding Charter of the United Nations begins with the words "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ...".

32. Youth are currently watching in horror at the events taking place in the world around them. Please take to heart the following recommendations:

- Use the peaceful mechanisms of the United Nations to discuss challenges and disagreements. Make the relevant connections between the wars taking place in the world and the current paradigm of development that exploits and discriminates. Know that youth do not understand any justification for the killing of innocent people;
- Divert the current military expenditure that takes place around the world to initiatives and tools that support sustainable development. Youth value that to which they devote the most resources.

Currently, it appears as though the Governments of the world valued war over development;

- Strengthen control over the trafficking and circulation of weapons and its financial enabler, the drug trade. Target intolerance, illiteracy, discrimination and the interference of outside economic and financial interests in developing countries as important sources of conflicts.

Trade and strategies for poverty elimination

33. Over 1 billion people of the world population live in poverty, many of them youth. The weakest bear most of the burdens of poverty. The effects of poverty are killing children in the thousands every day. Three quarters of poor youth live in rural areas facing malnutrition every day. The megacities are filled with youth who live on the street, often most affected by the harmful, unhealthy environment filled with drugs, violence and sexual abuse. They live with no hope for a decent life. Youth recognize that poverty eradication is the first step towards sustainability.

34. The process of globalization since the Rio Conference in 1992 has created many opportunities, but has also served to deepen and entrench poverty, and marginalization of peoples and nations, as well as accelerate ecological disintegration to the benefit of the Northern nations. Youth recognize the weakening of Governments together with the increasing influence of transnational corporations.

35. Youth realize that trade has an important role to play in tackling poverty, however many youth have been negatively affected by the current trade liberalization and expansion agenda, with little focus on actual local needs. Specific examples of where local needs are at odds with international trade agreements would include access to essential medicines and indigenous knowledge and the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights[3] or trade policies on agriculture that compromise local food security.

36. As such, youth wish to make the following recommendations for addressing this issue at the Summit:

- Immediate cancellation of the external debt of developing countries so as to allow these countries to mobilize their own resources for work towards sustainable development. Nations at the Summit should act in solidarity and call upon the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to take immediate steps towards this step of debt cancellation;

- Participation of the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and IMF in Summit preparations with the objective of placing poverty reduction squarely at the centre of their mandates, bringing it in line with development objectives being pursued by United Nations agencies, as outlined in Agenda 21 and the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

- The Summit needs to create an impetus for reshaping trade agreements to become instruments for achieving greater social and economic development that stress the need to accommodate local ownership of poverty reduction strategies;

- Resetting the purpose and framework of world trade rules and helping to end the relentless pressure on the developing world to take on new trade liberalization commitments at this time.

Climate change

37. Climate change is viewed as a threat not only to youth, but to all life on Earth. The youth community is disappointed at the lack of commitment and international cooperation on this important issue in the recent past. Given that environmental concerns are integral to issues of sustainable development, youth call for the Summit to address this issue by:

- Acknowledging that youth in several countries around the world in the last year have undertaken an initiative called the Bet, wherein they bet their governments that youth could reduce their carbon emissions by 8 per cent. If youth can accomplish this with limited resources, then so can Governments. Youth call upon the Summit to recognize that this is a matter of political will and commitment;

- Ratifying the Kyoto Protocol[4] to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[5] which is still not a sufficient solution in itself, but at least an advance in our progress with respect to the issue of climate change;

- Phasing out the use of unsustainable energy sources, such as nuclear power and fossil fuels.

The time has come to support alternative sources of energy, such as solar power and wind, through concrete policy initiatives.

V. Concluding remarks

38. The written submission of youth at the South-East Asia Subregional Preparatory Committee meeting held from 17 to 19 October 2001 begins by describing the nature of the sector of youth and its unique role in sustainable development. It states that "the value of youth involvement in sustainable development as embodied in chapter 25 of Agenda 21 is premised on the nature of the sector as the only 'transitional sector' among the major stakeholders. By 'transitional' we mean that after the youthful experience (age group 15-24 in United Nations standards), all young people eventually graduate to 'join' the main sector that they eventually choose to be part of as adult members of their respective societies. As such, the youth sector is valuable to sustainable development as youth ensure sustainability of leadership and constituency to move Agenda 21 to realization".

39. The concerns and recommendations submitted in this dialogue paper reflect the above-stated observation. Youth from around the world have worked together within a limited time frame and with minimal resources to present the ideas of the Ad Hoc Working Group for this review of chapter 25 of Agenda 21. We have examined the issues of access to education and creating awareness for sustainable development, access to information and participation in all levels of decision-making, and, lastly, youth employment. Each are major themes found within chapter 25. The final section entitled "Missing concerns" is included in order to address important concerns for youth and sustainable development that were excluded from chapter 25.

40. As much as possible, the Ad Hoc Working Group has tried to link youth's concerns in these areas to concrete actions and suggested partnerships for implementation. This remains in line with our earlier aspiration, to be stated time and time again, in the hope that it remains at the forefront of all those involved in preparations for the Summit. It is simply that the Summit process and results must imply:

Urgency, partnership, and implementation

41. The Ad Hoc Working Group would also like to restate the point made in the introduction that this dialogue paper is seen by youth as an initial step in its work with others for Summit preparations. As a dialogue paper, it is critical that the dialogue continue — between youth and Governments, between youth and the organizing Bureau of the Summit, between youth and various United Nations agencies, between youth and other Agenda 21 major groups, and between youth and all other stakeholders in sustainable development. Ultimately, this review of chapter 25 is one of many indications that youth are committed to working with others through multiple partnerships to raising the awareness of the Summit, devise solutions and policies for progress, and, most importantly, ensuring that key results become implemented.

Notes

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[3] See *Legal Instruments Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, done at Marrakesh on 15 April 1994* (GATT secretariat publication, Sales No. GATT/1994-7).

[4] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

Annex

Youth and youth groups participating in the international chapter 25 review

Members of the following organizations around the world came together to form the "Ad Hoc Working Group for the International Youth Review of Chapter 25" and participated in the drafting of the dialogue paper:

Africa

- Yvonne Khamati, World Youth Organization on Climate Change (WYOCC), Kenya
- Philip Osano, EcoNews Africa, Borgholm Youth Conference Co-Chair, Kenya
- Tamoifo Nkom Marie, UNEP youth adviser, Association Jeunesse Verte du Cameroon, Cameroon
- Shalala Oliver Sepiso, University of Zambia, UNEP youth adviser
- Zwuzi Aloysius, global youth reporter at the Borgholm Youth Conference
- Goldius Russell Baloyi, student at University of South Africa, involvement with Midrand Eco-City and Afribike, South Africa
- Appiah-Kubi Aaron, University of Ghana, Ghana

South America

- Alexandro Callejas, Mexican Youth Environmental Network (RAJ), Mexico
- Linabel Segovia Sarlat, UNEP youth adviser, Mexico
- Adriana Valenzuela, Directora Juvenil Nacional, Corporación Grupo Tayrona, UNEP youth adviser, Colombia
- Cynthia Dabul, Professional Council of Environmental Analysts of the Republic of Argentina, Argentina
- Ursula Carrascal, VIDA Instituto para la Protección del Medio Ambiente y miembro asociado del Consejo de Asesoramiento de la Juventud de la Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente (PNUMA) y del Comité Ambiental Juvenil del Perú, Peru

Asia and the Pacific

- Roy Cabonegro, Secretary-General, YSDA-Pilipinas (Youth for Sustainable Development Assembly, Philippines)
- Loraine Gatlabayan and Anthony Ambahan, YSDA-Pilipinas (Youth for Sustainable Development Assembly, Philippines)
- Afifa Raihana, UNEP youth adviser, Striving Towards Environmental Protection (Non-Governmental Organization), Bangladesh
- Ankur Ankas for the NGO Youth Working for the Environment, India
- Swati Raut, currently at the Technology and Human Development Programme, Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia), India
- Rasangi Prematilaka, Mandate the Future, Sri Lanka
- Rieko Kubota, UNEP youth adviser, Japan

South-west Asia

- Heba El Naggar, Arab Office for Youth and Environment (AOYE), Non-Governmental Organization, Egypt
- Maan Dagher, Friends of Tannourine Cedars, Lebanon
- Laila Rastegar, Co-Secretary of International Affairs, Green Front of Iran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Eastern Europe

- Sayana Bartanova, Non-Governmental Organization — For Sustainable Development, Coordinator of "Baikal School Leaders of Sustainable Development", Russian Federation

- Tomislav Tomasevic, Green Action/Friends of the Earth, Croatia; National Co-ordinator for South-East European Youth Network, Croatia
- Monika Kovacova, Daphne — Institute for Applied Ecology, Slovakia
- Miroslav Andrt, Czechoslovakia
- Tsvetan Ivanov Spassov, UNEP youth adviser, Bulgaria

Western Europe and North America

- Anna Ripoll and Carlos-Luis Pérez Aguirre, Platform for Spanish Youth Review — Spanish Youth Council, Spain
- Jonas Meckling and Ina Epkenhans, Futur X — Society for Intergenerational Equity, Germany
- Frank Mulder and Merel Bierkens, Netherlands youth representative to sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee, Netherlands
- Marte Lerberg Kopstad, International Student Festival in Trondheim, 2001 (ISFiT), Norway
- Lindsay Cole, Sierra Youth Coalition and Canadian Youth Summit Team, Canada
- Clarisse Kehler Siebert and Megan Bradley, Canadian Youth Summit Team, Canada
- Heidi Karst, currently Project Coordinator for the MARE Network in the Mediterranean region, Canada
- Kristin Casper, United States Youth Rio+10 Planning Group, United States of America
- Leif Holmberg, JO02 Network of the Swedish Youth Council, co-facilitator of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the International Chapter 25 Youth Review
- Julie Larsen, United Nations Association in Canada, co-facilitator of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the International Chapter 25 Youth Review